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The Assist

Helping to Improve Access to and Progress in the General Curriculum

June 2003

Volume 2, No. 5

Year Number Two Completed

Dear Readers,

Congratulations! We made it through the second year of administering MI-Access statewide. Each year the program improves as we gain more experience with it and learn from each other. For that, I want to thank all of you who have helped us better understand the effectiveness of the assessment process and materials by completing our online survey. If you have not yet shared your thoughts and ideas, you can do so through the end of June by logging on to <http://esrealitycheck.com/rc/takeit.asp?i=1872631>. Your input is critical as we prepare for 2004.

I have noted with great interest that No Child Left Behind (NCLB) seems to have raised awareness of the importance of assessing ALL students in the State Board of Education-approved Michigan Educational Assessment System. As a result, many special education students who did not participate in state assessment last year are now being accounted for in MI-Access and / or the MEAP. This is good news for all of us who believe that assessment data can help students by giving educators additional information with which to understand their strengths and needs.

This spring, while you were busy administering Phase 1 MI-Access, Phase 2 was on the development fast

track. The Phase 2 Assessment Plan Writing Team met for the last time to finalize the *Proposed Plan for Developing Phase 2.1 Alternate Assessments*, and the plan will be distributed to the field for feedback and comment. We will continue working at a fast pace throughout the summer and fall so item tryouts can take place next spring. In fall 2004, the MDE also will begin the considerable task of developing MI-Access science assessments as required by NCLB. (See the article titled "Phase 2 MI-Access Update" for more information.)

Looking back, I hope everyone found the last issue of *The Assist* (April 2003, Volume 2, No. 4) helpful in making IEP-required state assessment decisions. We received a great deal of positive feedback from the field and plan to continue dedicating future spring issues to IEP Team concerns.

As always it seems like just when we reach one milestone another looms large. But with your help and our dedicated staff we continue to move ahead. Thank you for your part in that effort. I hope you enjoy your summer.

Peggy Dutcher
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If you have ideas, suggestions, or
tips you would like to see included in
The Assist, send them to
mi-access@tasa.com.

NOTES FROM THE CONTRACTOR TO MI-ACCESS COORDINATORS

The Results Are In!

The MI-Access winter 2003 results are in, thanks to all of you who shipped your MI-Access materials by the April 11th deadline. The assessments have now been scanned and scored, and score reports should arrive in districts any day (if they have not already).

For the most part, the assessment materials were packaged as directed and required forms were completed correctly. This helped a great deal in expediting the scoring process. We are currently reviewing the problems that did occur so we can address them before the next administration of MI-Access. If you have any thoughts or suggestions about how we could simplify or clarify the return of materials process, please e-mail us at **mi-access@tasa.com**.

Update MI-Access Coordinator Designations and Request Training Materials Online.

August is the time for you to (1) provide us with updated information about your District and School MI-Access Coordinator designations and (2) let us know how many packets of new MI-Access training materials you need for the 2003/2004 school year. (Keep in mind that training materials are updated each year, so you need to order them for everyone involved in organizing and administering MI-

Access assessments—even those who have received materials before.) This year you may submit your information online between August 1 and August 21, so if you are a District MI-Access Coordinator, watch your e-mail for details. (Note: We still do not have e-mail addresses for about 12 percent of District MI-Access Coordinators. If you have not been receiving MI-Access e-mails on a regular basis, we probably do not have your correct address. Please e-mail us immediately at **mi-access@tasa.com**.)

Plan Ahead for Next Year.

This school year has not even ended and already we are planning for the next one. You need to begin planning too. In September, we will ship your training materials. Keep an eye out for them, and make sure they get to everyone in your district who is involved with MI-Access assessments. Early in October, we will send out forms for you to tell us how many teachers and students you expect to participate in 2004 MI-Access (Participation, Supported Independence, and Students Eligible for Phase 2). Accurate estimates are needed so we can print sufficient quantities of assessment materials. We need your estimates no later than October 13.

As always, if you have any questions or comments, please e-mail them to **mi-access@tasa.com**.

Check it out!

You will find more information on the state assessment of students with disabilities in the special education section of the Michigan Department of Education Web site **www.mi.gov/mde**.

IDEA Requires Districts to Have Alternate Assessments and Guidelines

Of late, a great deal of attention has been paid to how the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 affects the assessment of students with disabilities. It should be remembered, however, that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997 was the initial driving force behind the development of alternate assessments. Interestingly, that legislation asks districts to bear many of the same responsibilities as states with regard to (1) developing alternates to general education assessments, and (2) preparing guidelines for participation in those alternates for students with disabilities.

To refresh our collective memory of the IDEA requirements, the article below includes edited excerpts from an August 24, 2000, memorandum from Judith E. Heumann, Assistant Secretary, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education. The memorandum clarifies what districts are required by IDEA to do, and how those requirements relate to what is mandated at the state level. The notes in brackets are additions made by the MI-Access staff to provide additional Michigan-specific information.

When it comes to monitoring issues—which are addressed in the last question of this article—it becomes clear that the intent of IDEA 1997 somewhat mirrors that of NCLB, that is, to include more students with disabilities in state assessment programs, report the number of students participating in assessment, and continuously improve student performance. With the upcoming reauthorization of IDEA, the two laws will be aligned even more closely.

Q1: What is an alternate assessment?

A: An alternate assessment is an assessment designed for students with disabilities who are unable to participate in a general assessment, even when assessment accommodations are provided. The alternate assessment is a way for students, including those with the most significant disabilities, to participate in and benefit from assessment programs.

Q2: Do the requirements to (1) establish participation guidelines for alternate assessments and (2) develop alternate assessments apply to both state education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs)?

A: Yes. IDEA, 34 CFR§300.138 specifically requires the inclusion of children with disabilities in both state- **and** districtwide assessment programs and requires both SEAs and LEAs, as appropriate, to develop guidelines for the participation of children with disabilities in alternate assessments.

Q3: If the SEA has developed guidelines for participation in state alternate assessments, can the LEA use those guidelines to meet its LEA responsibility?

A: There is nothing that prohibits the

LEA from adopting the SEA guidelines if the SEA guidelines are consistent with the assessment program objectives of the LEA districtwide assessments. However, if the districtwide assessment is used for significantly different purposes than the state assessment, the LEA should develop its own guidelines consistent with its own assessment program goals.

Q4: Do states need to have alternate assessments for each content area assessed in the general assessment program?

A: The number of alternate assessments a state develops is a state decision. The alternate assessment(s) should, at a minimum, assess the broad content areas covered by the general state or districtwide assessment. However, at a minimum, Title I requires that reading/language arts and mathematics be assessed. Title I also requires that if other subject areas are assessed by the state for Title I purposes, then all students in Title I schools, in the grades assessed, need to be assessed in those same content areas. In general, the purpose of an alternate assessment should, at a minimum, match the purpose of the assessment to which it serves as an alternate. [Note: Michigan has chosen to develop alternate assessments

for English language arts and mathematics. Science will be added in 2007/2008.]

Q5: Can LEAs use the state alternate assessment to meet their obligation to develop an alternate to their districtwide assessment?

A: The issue is alignment between the alternate assessment and the general large-scale assessment. Districts must adopt local guidelines for participation in alternate assessments and they must develop and conduct alternate assessments no later than July 1, 2000. Whether an alternate assessment developed by the state is also an appropriate alternate for the local district depends upon (1) the type of alternate assessment selected, (2) the nature of the districtwide assessment, (3) the content measured, and (4) the purposes for which the results will be used.

Q6: Can LEAs use their own alternate assessment or must they use the state's?

A: In states with statewide assessment programs [hence, in Michigan], local districts must administer the state alternate assessment. Moreover, local districts must develop and conduct alternate assessments of their own if they have

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FEEDBACK ON GUIDELINES STILL NEEDED!

Throughout the school year, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has distributed copies of its *Draft Guidelines for Determining Participation in State Assessment for Students with Disabilities* in a variety of ways. They were (1) shared with District MI-Access Coordinators via the Coordinator Listserv; (2) included in the 2002/2003 MI-Access Training Materials (Section 3); and (3) a memorandum was mailed to local and intermediate school districts, public school academies, and interested associations informing them that the draft guidelines were posted on the MDE web site for their review and comment. Now the Department needs

to hear from IEP Team members as to whether or not the guidelines were helpful in determining which state assessment program was most appropriate for their student.

The draft guidelines, which are required by both IDEA and NCLB, must be submitted to the State Board of Education for approval. Before doing so, however, the MDE would like to hear from teachers, administrators, related services providers, school psychologists, MEAP Coordinators, and especially parents (who should be familiar with the guidelines), about their usefulness.

If you have already provided your

thoughts and ideas to the Department regarding the guidelines, thank you. The responses received to date have been thoughtful and informative. If you have not yet responded, you may still do so by accessing the MDE's online survey at <http://esrealitycheck.com/rc/takeit.asp?i=1714916#item6>. Because it is so important to hear from a broad range of people in the field, the MDE has extended the deadline for comments to June 30, 2003.

Once the guidelines are approved we will have to live with them for a long time, so please help the MDE make them as user-friendly as possible. Complete the survey today.

IDEA Requires Districts to Have Their Own Alternate Assessments and Guidelines

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districtwide assessments. If it is appropriate, the state alternate can also be used as the district alternate. [Michigan requires reading and mathematics assessments in grades 1-5 at the district level. LEAs may also assess other content areas and/or additional grades.]

Q7: IDEA refers to children with disabilities being included in "general state- and districtwide assessment programs," but only requires that SEAs report to the public on the participation and performance of children with disabilities on assessments. Are LEAs also required to report to the public in a similar fashion?

A: The IDEA requirement is for reporting by the SEA. Many states, however, have similar requirements for LEAs to report on local assessment programs. Under IDEA, this is a state decision. [Note: NCLB has reporting requirements for both the state and LEA.]

Q8: How will the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) monitor

compliance with IDEA 1997 assessment requirements?

A: OSEP's Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process focuses on compliance and results. There are several mechanisms that OSEP employs to review a state's performance in these areas. Through the state's self-assessment and OSEP's data review, OSEP examines results-oriented data, such as drop-out rates, graduation rates, and performance on assessments. These data will be used to determine the level of intervention of OSEP's monitoring activities.

As part of the state's self-assessment process, information from state- and districtwide assessments should be used by the state's Monitoring Steering Committee to evaluate the state's level of implementation and performance. For example, states should examine the number of students taking statewide assessments and the number participating in alternate assessments. Also, performance on assessments is an important indicator for a state to use in

evaluating and improving results for children with disabilities.

As part of data collection in the SEA and in LEAs, OSEP monitors will

- review documents and conduct interviews regarding participation in state- and districtwide assessments;
- gather data to determine that states have developed alternate assessments and provided guidelines for the participation of children with disabilities in alternate assessments;
- gather information on how alternate assessments are aligned with general curriculum standards;
- gather information about participation of children with disabilities in state- and districtwide assessment programs (including information reported to the public—aggregated and disaggregated—in the same frequency and in the same detail as for non-disabled students); and
- review whether IEP Teams determine any modifications in administering state- or districtwide assessments.

MI-Access Changes the Way Teachers Teach

Quite often the MI-Access staff hears from people in the field that the state's new alternate assessment has helped them find ways to enhance instruction. Following is a letter we received recently from Gayla Vassilakos, a TMI teacher in the Shiawassee RESD. Short and to the point, her letter shows that, while new assessments are not always welcome or perfect, they can benefit teachers and, ultimately, students. The letter was sent to Brad Oliver, Principal of Shiawassee Developmental Center in Owosso, Michigan, who passed it along to the MI-Access staff.

Dear Mr. Oliver:

Two years ago when we heard that our classroom was going to be a part of the MI-Access pilot program, we were not happy. Here comes more unwanted paperwork, we thought. Reluctantly, we went to the meeting and watched the video. We left the meeting with great reservations.

As we began to administer MI-Access, we realized that we had a really good program and that we



were doing all the right things EXCEPT our students were never expected to initiate activities. As educators, we were always taught to be prepared and have everything all ready to go for our learning activities.

Unfortunately, our students could do many things, but they did not know how or when to initiate them.

We have since revamped our program to include the initiation of all activities, and thanks to MI-Access testing, we believe we have made great improvements to our overall program.

Sincerely,

Gayla Vassilakos, TMI Teacher
Shiawassee RESD

CALLING FOR PRESENTERS AT THE FALL MI-ACCESS COORDINATOR CONFERENCES

For the past two years, MI-Access staff has conducted a "Training of the Trainers" session at each of its annual conferences for MI-Access Coordinators. This year, however, training of the trainers will take place through another medium, perhaps a Web-cast. Therefore, the MDE plans to dedicate more of its conference sessions to practitioners so they can share their experiences with their peers.

To that end, Peggy Dutcher, Coordinator, State Assessment for Students with Disabilities, is requesting proposals from professionals—primarily MI-Access Coordinators, but also teachers who may be able to help coordinators with their work—interested in presenting at the fall conferences. The presenters accepted will be assigned to a session at the conference in their region to help give it a local flavor.

Topics of particular interest are: (1) how

results have been used to improve student performance and/or school programs; (2) helpful suggestions for scheduling and administering MI-Access; and (3) successful ways to train assessment administrators on how to conduct observations and score students.

Proposals may be submitted using the *Annual MI-Access Conference Presenter Proposal Form* posted on the MDE Web site (www.mi.gov/mde). On the form, potential presenters will be asked to (1) give concrete examples of what they will discuss; (2) explain how the information may benefit others, and (3) provide pertinent contact information, such as their name, title, address, and home and work telephone numbers (including area codes). The proposal forms must be submitted to dutcherp@mi.gov no later than July 15.

If your proposal is accepted, you will be

contacted by the MI-Access staff early in August so you can begin preparing your formal presentation.

In addition to these sessions, the conference will have numerous break-outs conducted by the MDE on such topics as (1) NCLB assessment and reporting requirements, (2) MI-Access Participation, (3) MI-Access Supported Independence, and (4) Phase 2 MI-Access development.

This fall, MI-Access is holding three conferences:

September 10 - Marquette
September 23 - Grayling
September 29 - Lansing

We hope you will join the MI-Access staff this fall as we share what we have learned about MI-Access over the past few years with School and District MI-Access Coordinators from around the state.

State Board Approves Definitions for Full Academic Year, Graduation Rate, and Attendance Rate

Whenever new federal laws are passed, there are always terms within those laws that need to be defined at the state level. That is true of the terms "full academic year," "graduation rate," and "attendance rate" as they are used in No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

Once defined, these terms can impact educational practices in different ways. For example, the just-approved definition of "graduation rate" (1) allows IEP Teams to determine how long it will take for their special education student to graduate (which is good, given that some special education students take longer than the standard four years to graduate with a regular diploma), and (2) allows LEAs to receive credit for graduating special education students, even if they do not do so within the usual four years.

Below are three definitions the Michigan State Board of Education approved at its April 24 meeting for use in making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) calculations as required by NCLB. They have been submitted to the U.S. Department of Education for approval.

FULL ACADEMIC YEAR

For a school district: Students must have been enrolled in the school district for the two most recent semi-annual official count days.

For an individual school:

1. Students must have been enrolled in the school for the two most recent semi-annual official count days.
2. For students in their first year in a school building because of the grade structure of the receiving school (for example, a student

"graduating" from a K-4 elementary school to a 5-8 middle school), the student will be considered as having been in the middle school for a full academic year if the student was, in the previous year, enrolled in another school (in this case the elementary school) in the same school district.

3. Students who have been in the school district for a full academic year but have moved from building to building at the same level (that is, elementary to elementary) within the district will be counted in the district's AYP but not in a building's AYP.

GRADUATION RATE

1. For purposes of calculating graduation rates, a "school year" will be considered as from the start of a school's academic year through August 31. This allows the graduation rate to include seniors who graduate during the summer.
2. A beginning target percentage graduation rate will be established for the state. This beginning target will be established in a manner similar to the calculation of achievement targets for Adequate Yearly Progress in reading and mathematics. All high schools in the state will be arranged in descending order of graduation rate percentage, along with the enrollment for each school. The graduation rate of the high school at the 20th percentile of total state high school enrollment will become the initial target graduation rate for the state. The initial target graduation rate will remain constant for

two years, 2003/2004 and 2004/2005, but will be increased in 2005/2006 and 2008/2009.

3. It is estimated that, at this time, the 20th-percentile-of-total-enrollment formula will result in a beginning statewide target graduation rate of approximately 80 percent.
4. Schools above this rate will be considered as making AYP. Schools below the rate will be considered making AYP if they achieve a certain percentage growth within the first two years of establishing the target rate and a certain percentage growth every year thereafter ("safe harbor").
5. For schools whose graduation rates initially are below the state target rate, the amount of improvement needed to achieve "safe harbor" will be calculated by subtracting a school's actual graduation rate from the state target rate. In order to be considered making AYP by a "safe harbor" approach, a school will be expected to reduce this gap number by ten percent (10%) over a period of two years.
6. Four years will be considered the normal period of time for a high school student to earn a regular diploma. For a high school containing grades below 9 (e.g., a 7-12 high school), only grades 9-12 will be considered. For a 10-12 high school, the normal period will be four years and, for purposes of calculating graduation rates, it will be necessary to begin tracking the cohort in grade 9 in the district's middle or junior

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high school(s). For a student with disabilities (special education students), the student's Individualized Education Program Team (IEPT) may determine a specific "normal period" for the student.

7. Graduation rate will be computed by following ninth-grade students as a cohort through the years of high school. Graduation rate will be calculated on the percentage of the cohort that earns a regular diploma. When students exit from a school district, an exit code for the student must be entered into the Single Record Student Database (SRSDB) at the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI). These codes (listed below) will be used to determine what students will remain in the cohort being followed to calculate the graduation rate.

8. Students with the following CEPI codes will be considered in the cohort and will be included in the calculation of graduation rate:

- 01 – Graduated from general education with a diploma.
- 02 – Graduated from general education with a diploma and applied to degree granting college or university.
- 03 – Graduated from an alternative program.
- 04 – Graduated and applied to a non-degree granting institution.
- 05 – Completed general education with an equivalency certificate.
- 06 – Completed general education with other certificate.

- 07 – Dropped out of school.
- 10 – Expelled from the school district (no further services).
- 11 – Enlisted in military or Job Corps.
- 13 – Incarcerated.
- 16 – Unknown.
- 17 – Placed in a recovery or rehabilitative program.
- 19 – Expected to continue in the same school district.
- 20 – Special education student – received certificate of completion.
- 21 – Special education student – reached maximum age for service.
- 22 – Special education student – no longer receiving services and returned to general education program.

9. The ninth- (or tenth-) grade cohort will be reduced by students who exit from school during the high school grades according to the following CEPI exit codes:

- 08 – Enrolled in another district in Michigan.
- 09 – Moved out of state.
- 12 – Deceased.
- 14 – Enrolled in home school.
- 15 – Enrolled in non-public school.
- 18 – Left adult education.
- 25 – Special education student – enrolled in special education in another district.
- 26 – Special education student – enrolled in another district, not in special education.

The following CEPI exit codes would require the student to remain in the denominator but would not be counted as graduat-

ing in the calculation of graduation rate:

- 05 – Completed general education with an equivalency certificate.
- 06 – Completed general education with other certificate.
- 07 – Dropped out of school.
- 16 – Unknown.
- 20 – Special education student – received certificate of completion.
- 21 – Special education student – reached maximum age for services.
- 22 – Special education student – no longer receiving services and returned to general education program.

The following CEPI exit codes will be used to calculate dropout rate:

- 07 – Dropped out of school.
- 16 – Unknown.

10. For purposes of calculating AYP for a high school, a four-year cohort (grades 9-12) will be used for all Michigan high schools. This will entail starting with 9th graders in the schools that feed into high schools serving only grades 10-12. Because dropouts typically occur between grades 9 and 10, a disparity will likely appear in the graduation rate of a 9-12 high school versus a 10-12 high school. While the official AYP status will be determined as just described, it is planned that high schools will be given a second advisory AYP status based on a 10-12 cohort, enabling all high schools to be compared using the same calculation method.

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11. It is not an expectation that, like student proficiency in English language arts and mathematics, the target goal for graduation rate in Michigan should reach 100 percent by 2013/2014. The reality of high school enrollment, in Michigan and elsewhere, would make this an improbable, if not impossible, goal to reach. It is expected, however, that growth toward higher targets should be encouraged. Based on an estimated beginning target graduation rate of 80 percent for 2002/2003, the following intermediate target goals are recommended:

2005/2006 – 85%

2008/2009 – 90%

(This rate would remain

in effect through 2013/2014.)

ATTENDANCE RATE

The calculation of attendance rate will be based on data submitted to CEPI in the SRSD, comparing:

- each student's total possible number of attendance days that year, based on the student's date of enrollment; and
- each student's actual days of attendance out of the total attendance days possible for that student.

A school's attendance rate will be the aggregate total number of days of actual attendance for all students in the school, divided by the aggregate total number of possible days of attendance for all students, based upon each student's date of enrollment, times 100, to obtain a percentage figure.

The initial target attendance rate for the state will be 85 percent. Schools above this percent will be considered making AYP. Schools below this percent will be considered making AYP if, over a period of two years, they reduce by 10 percent the percentage of students representing the gap between the 85 percent target and the school's actual rate ("safe harbor"). (Example: School attendance rate = 70 percent.

85 percent minus 70 percent = a 15 percent gap. 15 times 10 percent = 1.5. The school target becomes 71.5 percent in order to make AYP.)

It is not expected that Michigan's eventual target attendance rate would be 100 percent. The realities of student attendance, in Michigan and elsewhere, would make this an improbable, if not impossible, goal to reach. It is expected, however, that growth toward higher targets should be encouraged. Based on an estimated beginning target attendance rate of 85 percent for 2002/2003, the following intermediate target goal is recommended:

2005/2006 – 90%

(This rate would remain

in effect through 2013/2014.)

Clarifications of these definitions should help schools and districts as they make the calculations required in NCLB.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Join your peers in talking and learning about MI-Access at one of three MI-Access Annual Conferences scheduled this fall. Pick the one nearest you and put it on your calendar now.

September 10 – Marquette @ Northern Michigan University

September 23 – Grayling @ the Holiday Inn

September 29 – Lansing @ the Sheraton Hotel

Look for registration information in the August issue of *The Assist* and on the MDE Web site (www.mi.gov/mde).



Dutcher Receives NCLB Training

Peggy Dutcher, whom most readers know as the leader of MI-Access and Coordinator for State Assessment for Students with Disabilities, was chosen by the U.S. Department of Education to be trained as a peer reviewer for No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Her whirlwind training—which took her to Alaska, Georgia, New Jersey, and Idaho—allowed her to (1) work with representatives of the federal government and other states, and (2) read and evaluate a variety of state assessment and accountability plans. “I’m relieved it is over,” said Dutcher, “but I learned a lot that will be helpful as we implement Michigan’s assessment and accountability plan.”

Reminder: Next School Year Phase 1 MI-Access Switches from Age to Grade

For the first two years of statewide implementation, IEP Teams were instructed to use a student’s AGE to determine when he or she should be assessed with Phase 1 MI-Access. In 2003/2004, that will change. Why? Because No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requires that participation rates and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) be calculated by GRADE in the content areas

of English language arts and mathematics. In order to make sure every student counts in those calculations, they must be assessed by grade.

So who will be assessed at the state level? Currently, Michigan assesses students in English language arts and/or mathematics in grades 4, 7, 8 and 11. The following table shows which grade-

level assessment a student should be administered if he or she is ungraded.

For more detailed information on the age versus grade issue, see “Age or Grade: How Do I Decide Which Students to Assess and Make Sure ALL My Students Count?” on page 12 of the April 2003 issue of *The Assist*.

MEAP/MI-Access Grades Assessed <i>(If a student is in one of these grades, he or she MUST be assessed at the state level.)</i>	Phase 1 MI-Access Ages <i>(If a student is NOT assigned a grade level, but is one of these ages as of December 1 of the assessment year, he or she MUST be assessed using the MI-Access grade assessment in the left-hand column.)</i>
Grade 4	10 years old
Grade 7	13 years old
Grade 8	14 years old
Grade 11	17 and 18 years old
Note: No Child Left Behind requires that students in these grade levels be assessed in the state assessment system. In 2005/2006, grades 3, 5 and 6 will be added.	

GLOSSARY



Additional Academic Indicators:

Academic indicators are data points that, when coupled with other data points, provide a picture of how well students are doing. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 requires all schools, districts, and states to use “proficiency on state assessments” as one indicator of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). For high schools, it also requires the use of graduation rates (the State Board of Education approved a new definition in April 2003) as an additional academic indicator. For elementary and middle schools, NCLB allows states to determine what “other” or “additional” indicator will be used. Michigan has chosen attendance rates as its additional academic indicator.

Assessment Plan: Much like a builder’s blueprint, an assessment plan guides how an assessment is built or developed. It includes detailed information on (1) the assumptions underlying the assessment; (2) the populations and subject areas assessed; (3) the number of assessment items and their formats; (4) prototype items to guide item writers; and (5) other information clarifying how and why the assessment should be developed.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001:

An act that reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, including Title programs I-IX. With regard to assessment, it (1) requires states to implement a single accountability system for all public schools and all students and (2) increases the number of times students—including those with disabilities and limited English proficiency—must be assessed.

Phase 2 MI-Access Update

In April, the MI-Access Phase 2 Assessment Plan Writing Team (APWT) met for the last time to finalize its *Proposed Plan for Developing Phase 2.1 MI-Access Assessments*. Our sincere thanks go out to all of the dedicated parents and professionals who worked tirelessly on the project. Everything the APWT did was complicated by the passage of No Child Left Behind and resultant state decisions, both of which required repeated modifications to the course of work. But the group hung in there and, as a result of its work, a draft plan will be distributed for field review.

As always, the MI-Access staff wants and needs to know what you—as teachers, education specialists, administrators, related services providers, MEAP Coordinators, parents, and others—think about the proposed assessment plan. It outlines, in great detail, what the assessment will look like for the population being assessed.

If you do not have a hard copy of the proposed plan, you may download it from http://www.mi.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-5235_6785_6787-36793-00.html. You also may respond to survey questions and provide additional comments on the plan at <http://esrealitycheck.com/survey/index.asp?i=1295513>. (The survey may be accessed through the MDE Web site, www.mi.gov/mde, as well.) Your feedback will help the MDE make the Phase 2.1 MI-Access assessments high-quality, useful tools for determining what students know and are able to do.

Preparing, distributing, and receiving feedback on the proposed plan are just a few of the many steps involved in developing Phase 2 MI-Access assessments. The timeline on the opposite page shows the many other steps that have been, or are being, taken to implement Michigan’s Alternate Assessment Program.

No Phase 2 MI-Access Reports in This Year’s Results Folders

As required by federal law, the MDE and its operational contractor—BETA/TASA—shipped MI-Access results to districts the first week of June (hence meeting the “before the end of the school year” mandate). When District MI-Access Coordinators receive them—if they have not already—they will notice something different. The *MI-Access Participation Rate Reports* and the *Disaggregated Reports for Students Eligible for Phase 2 MI-Access* are not included.

Why the change? First, in order to calculate Adequate Yearly Progress as required by NCLB, schools and districts needed to report how many students were “proficient” on the state assessments they took. This information was

not asked for on this year’s *Students Eligible for Phase 2 MI-Access Scan Form*, so additional data had to be collected. Second, more detailed information was also needed to accurately complete *2003 MI-Access Participation Rate Reports* and *MI-Access Disaggregated Reports for Students Eligible for Phase 2 MI-Access* (also required by NCLB). Those reports, which were delayed until the data could be collected, will be shipped later this summer under separate cover.

For more detailed information on this topic, see “Online Data Collection System Under Development for Students Eligible for Phase 2 MI-Access” on page 3 of the April 2003 issue of *The Assist*.

Tentative MI-Access Development Timeline

Phase 1 MI-Access (Participation and Supported Independence)

Date	Task
Statewide Implementation Winter 2002	Age 9, 10, 13, 14, 17, and 18 assessments completed.
Spring 2003-Spring 2004	Develop assessment activities for grades 3 and 6.
Spring 2004	Content Advisory Committee (CAC), Sensitivity Review Committee (SRC), and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) review assessment items. Revise items as needed.
Statewide Implementation Winter 2005	MI-Access Phase 1 assessments in grades 3-8 and 11.

Phase 2.1 MI-Access (ELA, mathematics, career and employability skills)

Date	Task
April/May 2003	Complete Proposed Phase 2.1 Assessment Plan and item specifications.
End of May 2003	Disseminate Proposed Assessment Plan for field review by online survey.
Spring/Summer 2003	Locate/develop and review reading passages for the ELA assessment.
Summer 2003	Item writing begins.
August 2003	Field review completed.
August/September 2003	MDE and advisory committees review feedback from the field. Revise items as needed.
October 2003 (tentative)	Assessment Plan to SBE.
Fall 2003	CAC, SRC, and TAC review assessment items.
Spring 2004	Phase 2.1 item tryouts.
Summer 2004	CAC, SRC and TAC review tryout data. Revise items as needed.
Spring 2005	Phase 2.1 pilot.
Summer 2005	CAC, SRC, and TAC review pilot data. Revise items as needed.
Statewide Implementation Winter 2006	MI-Access Phase 2.1 assessments in grades 3-8 and 11.

Phase 2.2 MI-Access (alternate ELA, alternate mathematics)

Date	Task
Fall 2003	Develop Phase 2.2 Proposed Assessment Plan and item specifications (MDE and advisory committees).
Winter 2004	Disseminate Proposed Assessment Plan for field review by online survey.
Winter 2004	Item writing begins.
Spring 2004	Field review of the Proposed 2.2 Assessment Plan completed.
June 2004	MDE and advisory committees review feedback from the field. Revise as needed.
Summer 2004	CAC, SRC, and TAC item reviews.
Spring 2005	Phase 2.2 item tryouts.
Summer 2005	CAC, SRC, and TAC review tryout data. Revise items as needed.
Spring 2006	Phase 2.2 pilot.
Summer 2006	CAC, SRC, and TAC review pilot data. Revise items as needed.
Statewide Implementation Winter 2007	MI-Access Phase 2.2 assessments in grades 3-8 and 11.

Important MI-Access Dates

Submit Coordinator Designations and Training Material Requests Online

August 1 – August 21

MI-Access Training Materials Arrive in Districts

by September 15

MI-Access Conferences

September 10 – Marquette

September 23 – Grayling

September 29 – Lansing

Submit Estimates of MI-Access Teacher/ Student Counts to BETA/TASA

October 1 – October 13

MI-Access 2004 Assessment Window

February 16 – March 31, 2004



Bookmark these Web sites:

www.ed.gov/free/ (NCLB)

www.nochildleftbehind.gov/

www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/esea/

www.mi.gov/mde

This newsletter related to the assessment of students with disabilities is distributed to local and intermediate superintendents, directors of special education, MI-Access Coordinators, MEAP Coordinators, SEAC, Special Education monitors, MDE staff, school principals, Parent Advisory Committees, and institutes of higher education. The *Assist* may also be downloaded from the Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services section of the MDE web site: www.mi.gov/mde.

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